

How Does My Accrued Sick Leave Benefit Me as I Prepare to Retire?

“Tip Sheet”

Accrued Sick Leave Credit is defined in each System. Sick Leave is included with Membership Service Credit, Prior Service Credit, and Portability Service Credit as part of the total of “Creditable Service” in the Employees’ and Uniformed Systems. Sick Leave is also recognized as service credit in the Police Officers Retirement System.

Both the Employees’ and Uniformed Systems require the member to have a minimum of five (5) years of service in determining eligibility for retirement. A member in the Employees’ system is eligible for Regular Service Retirement at age 65 with 5 years of service. Also, if a member is at least age 50, they are eligible for Regular Service Retirement when their age plus years of service equal 80 (the “*Rule of 80*”). A Uniformed Retirement System Member is eligible at age 55 with at least 6 years of Creditable Service or after 25 years of Creditable Service.

Accrued Sick Leave Credit means credit allowed a member at the rate of one (1) month for each one hundred seventy-two (172) hours of accrued unused sick leave, and pro rata credit for each fraction thereof.

For members eligible to use their Accrued Sick Leave Credit, the eligibility date for Regular Service Retirement in Police and Uniformed is closer by the amount of accrued unused sick leave they have. For members of the Employees’ Retirement System, Accrued Sick Leave Credit is an additional amount of Creditable Service, but does not change the age calculation.

Using the “*Rule of 80*”, a member, who is at least age 50, is eligible for Regular Service Retirement when their age plus their years of Creditable Service equal at least the sum of eighty (80) years.

? A common question ? -- “Why do I only get half credit for sick leave?”

Actually the entire sick leave balance is counted as service credit. Because age and service credit make up the formula for the “*Rule of 80*”, sick leave added to service credit allows a member to retire earlier. But remember, by retiring earlier, the member is both younger and has less service credit. Two parts sick leave make up for one part each of age and service for the calculation of the “*Rule of 80*”.

For benefit service totals, having sick leave and retiring earlier because of the sick leave still results in more total service credit than not having any sick leave. The benefit for an individual will be greater if they have sick leave than if they do not have sick leave.

This “Tip Sheet” was prepared by the Fairfax County Retirement Agency for members of the Fairfax County Retirement Systems. If you have additional questions, please call 703-279-8200.